

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Michael C. Burgess, M.D.  
Subcommittee on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection on  
“Self-Driving Cars: The Road to Deployment”  
February 14, 2017**

Good morning. I want to thank Chairman Latta and Ranking Member Schakowsky for holding this hearing today. When I was Chairman of the Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade Subcommittee we dedicated a lot of time to self-driving cars and their ability to save lives. It is important that we continue to focus on these vehicles as they become more present on our roadways.

In particular, it is important that the commercial use of self-driving cars not be hindered by a patchwork of state regulations on testing and deployment of these vehicles. Throughout my life I have seen the life-saving effects of advancements in vehicle technology, from the seat belt, to the air bag, to automatic

emergency braking. Self-driving vehicles are the next step in this trajectory.

Last year, automobile related fatalities were around 35,000 and rose for the first time in nearly a decade. In my home state of Texas, the number was 3,516. The vast majority of those fatalities are still related to human behavior. Already, we have heard that fatalities are up again in the first half of this year.

NHTSA's recent Federal Automated Vehicle Policy guidance is a good first step, but questions remain about its implementation. We must remain vigilant in ensuring government does not get in the way of the very innovation that can keep us safe.

I look forward to the witness testimony and continuing the discussion on the road to self-driving cars.